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On the cover: Devotees with the statue of Saint Rita during the Feast of 22 May 2022 in Cascia. Photo by: Lamberto Manni

# FROM THE BEES Bimonthly of the Augustinian Monastery TO THE ROSES of Saint Rita of Cascia NO. 4 JUL-AUG 2022

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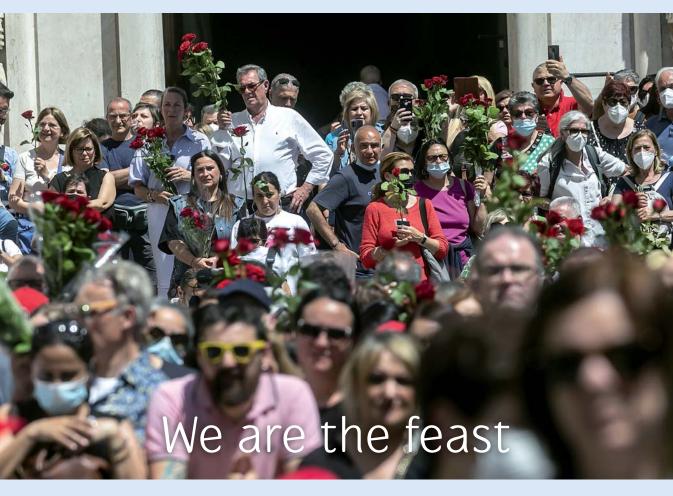
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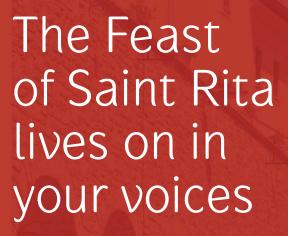
his May 22<sup>nd</sup> was truly a gift from God, because with the strength of joy and the coming together of millions of people he showed us that the wealth of this day is us, all of us who make it come alive. As such, the feast will not end here or today, but it will continue tomorrow and everywhere through each of us: it calls on us to act to make what we have received from the hands of Saint Rita bear fruit and to build a fraternal, just and supportive society together."

In these brief but decisive words, Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis, Prioress of the Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia, has encapsulated the value and meaning of the days of solemn celebrations that we spent in

honour of our beloved Saint Rita together with many of you. In this issue of the magazine, we want to retrace it with many photos, reflections, stories, voices and emotions.

Whether you were finally able to return to her feet here in Cascia, or whether you did so virtually through our live stream that reached so many people, what is certain is that our global family members have returned to embrace one another before their spiritual Mother to celebrate her properly. And we nuns are certain that she responded to each one of us with the light of her heart, the light that we must now revive every day and lead in the world... today, tomorrow and always, in her name!







### WHEN DEVOTION IS PARTICIPATION







### WHEN DEVOTION IS PARTICIPATION



#### WHEN DEVOTION IS PARTICIPATION



# CHARITY MARATHON FOR THE HOME OF SAINT RITA

The live stream from the monastery brought the Feast of Saint Rita into the homes of all devotees once again this year. At the same time, it directed the voices and intentions of the whole world to Rita's feet. As such, devotion was also made tangible through participation, thanks to the generosity shown by the devotees who donated to support the Home of Saint Rita, the house that the nuns dream of building to welcome the families of patients hospitalised at the Hospital of Cascia. The mission is shared with the Saint Rita of Cascia Foundation, which is raising funds for the project, but also with you, as you can make a difference today!

The joy of the feast is still within us and Saint Rita invites us to spread it! **DONATE NOW!** You can still act so that the Home of Saint Rita opens its doors soon, bringing love to the sick.

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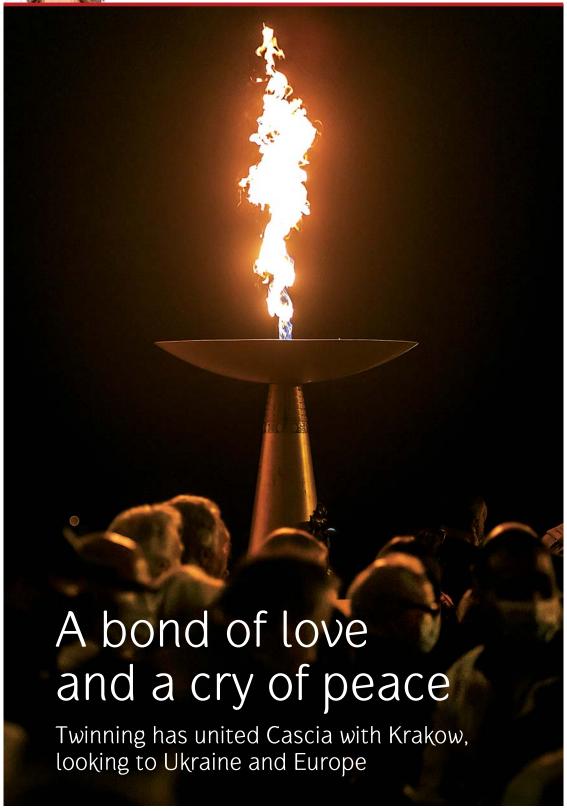
specifying "Home of Saint Rita" as the reason.

THANK YOU!





by Maurizia Di Curzio





The love that the populations have for her is the point of encounter and fraternity that motivates and animates every twinning

t's a fixed appointment. Every 22<sup>nd</sup> of the month it's not to be missed, like meeting a Friend. You want to spend some time together, you can lift your heart and share the weight that life sometimes has in store for us. It's a special meeting, a one-on-one with her, with Saint Rita. It happens in Krakow, the city chosen for the spiritual and population twinning this year, thanks to which we are returning to Poland after 41 years after connecting to Czestochova in 1981. Little Cascia cannot be compared with the great cities of the world with which it has shared this event, but the great spiritual and civil value of Saint Rita is the true driving force of this initiative. The love that the various populations have for her is the point of encounter and fraternity that motivates and animates every twinning. The practice of invoking Saint Rita with a celebration on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month is spreading more and more in the Polish Dioceses. The Church of St. Catherine of the Augustinians in Krakow is an example

of this beautiful tradition. The enthusiasm of the Augustinian Fathers and Provincial Prior Beniamin Łukasz Kuczała made 22 April 2022 an even more special occasion. It was precisely this date that was chosen for lighting the Torch of Peace and Forgiveness. From the early morning the outer perimeter of the church of Saint Catherine was decorated by many vases, each containing a bouquet of roses of every shade - no colour was missing. The roses seemed to form a rainbow on the sidewalk that led step by step to the doorway of the church. Many people, very many, came to visit her, to pray to her, to plead to her. The enthusiasm in their eyes was striking, as was the silence, the respect while waiting in line, being patient and waiting for the person in front to finish their "chat" with the Special Friend. There was one after another all day long. The parish priest of a nearby town and his parishioners were waiting for their turn, all holding a rose. A young mother had her baby in her arms

and was also clutching a rose. Not a single person came without the fragrant gift for her. She was there, happy, up high, watching them one by one. After having turned their gaze towards her, everyone awaited their turn to embrace her. Yes, resting at the bottom of a column was her relic, and no one missed out on her Embrace. There are many stories of those who received grace, such as Urszula who, after a pilgrimage to Cascia, received the gift of becoming a grandmother again thanks to the intercession of Saint Rita. After a difficult birth, Barbara risked losing her son, who was born prematurely with a serious infection, but after many treatments and many prayers directed at the saint he has been saved.

At the time of the solemn celebration the church was truly packed. It was nice to see how many families were present at Holy Mass. In his homily the Bishop's delegate recalled: "In the past few years, three Polish women have received the Saint Rita International Recognition Award, thanks to how Poland is perceived: as a country where Christianity is alive and there are people who implement the Gospel commandment to love their enemies literally." Being on the border of the war-torn Ukrainian land means that this commandment is now being experienced in a decisive way by all the Polish people. Although history refers us to the conflicts between the two peoples, Poles did not hesitate for a moment to help their Ukrainian "brothers" in this difficult time. They waited for them at the border and welcomed them into their homes, making them feel solidarity. Some refugees have returned to their destroyed cities, aware that they still have to take cover, while others have decided to stay in Poland, asking to be able to return the hospitality by putting themselves at the service of the country, sweeping the city streets while waiting to find a job. To help them and make them a bit more independent, on Sundays Poles go to Ukrainian women to buy pierogi,

The lighting of the Torch of Peace and Forgiveness on 22 April 2022



ravioli filled with potatoes and ricotta typical of the two lands. They try to help them as brothers in every way. They are reluctant to talk about it and say: 'We help them, but they are the ones who give more to our hearts'.

In Krakow, we cannot fail to remember St. John Paul II who in 2000, on the occasion of the centenary of her canonisation and standing before the mortal remains

The Poles didn't hesitate to help their Ukrainian "brothers"

Let us hope that the disbelief, the sadness and the anger of this historic moment will be transformed



of Saint Rita in Piazza San Pietro, said: "The saint is the sign of what the Lord can do when he encoun-



ters humble hearts open to his Love. Rita found an unshakable strength in her faith, thanks to which she was a woman of peace in every situation." Together, then, let us hope that the disbelief, the sadness, the anger of this historical moment will be transformed, as it was for the Poles, in us all, into energy, strength in "doing" and, above all, into great Enthusiasm, a word that etymologically means: Inhabited by God.

After passing through the town of Saint Rita's birth, Roccaporena, where it was taken to the Rock of prayer with a way of the cross, the torch arrived at the churchyard of the Basilica of Cascia on 21 May. There, with the lighting of the votive tripod, the great flame that illuminates the night ascended towards the sky and delivered into Her hands all the prayer intentions of the people of Krakow and all her devotees, together with the cry that arises from all our hearts: "Peace be upon this earth!"





# Blessed Teresa Fasce, portrait of a woman from the 1900s

"I dreamed of Saint Rita...
I experienced moments of Heaven"

Blessed Mother Maria Teresa Fasce





by Mauro Papalini, Augustinian historian

# In love with Saint Rita

## The bond between the Mother and the Saint

aint Rita was the most important figure in the life of Blessed Maria Teresa Fasce (after God of course). This can be found in all of her acts. She invited everyone to pray to Saint Rita, she entrusted her with all her problems or those of the community; she had an unconditional trust in the powerful patronage of the saint of the impossible. We do not know how she

came to discover Saint Rita, Mother Fasce never said. We can imagine that she read some of her biographies on the occasion of the saint's canonisation or that the Augustinian Fathers of the Consolation of Genoa undertook initiatives to spread the worship of the new saint. The Blessed Women referred to the interventions of Saint Rita for her person on very rare occasions.





One such instance occurred in a declaration by Maria Teresa Fasce (25 December 1907), when she wrote to her sisters: "Saint Rita also brightened me up so much by allowing me to smell a truly heavenly fragrance and so I approached the Sacred Altar with more courage." This refers to the well-known aroma that Saint Rita often emits in particular cases. Another time. Mother Fasce told her sisters about a dream she had towards the end of February 1918: "I dreamed of Saint Rita and I experienced moments of Heaven... I dreamt this about last week, when the prodigious movement had already taken place. I continued the dream and asked her: Saint Rita, is the war ending? And she beckoned to me first, and then said: It is ending! She didn't say when, but... the thought that we will remember a day of peace made me very happy and it was enough to inspire me with confidence and hope in her powerful patronage." Finally, in her private renewal of vows, Mother Fasce described herself as follows: "I, Sister Maria Eletta Fasce, unworthy Augustinian of Saint Rita... I intend to renew this sacrifice, which I renew and present to you again through the hands of my dear Holy Mother Rita." We could say that Teresa Fasce lived all her life for Saint Rita and her many works prove it.

She lived her whole life for Saint Rita and her many works prove it



Illustration by Arianna Usai

# RITA AND TERESA



We do not know how Rita, who had just been proclaimed a saint, reached the heart of the young Maria Fasce. But, it is certain that their spiritual union was so deep that it gave rise to a force that is still active. Blessed Mother Fasce entrusted the story of the dreams in which she received Saint Rita to her letters. Her love for the saint, who she felt was a friend and mother and who she imitated in her works and holiness, was no secret.

"Doing is a word that indicates practicality, dexterity, creativity, involvement. It asks us not to stand by, to take part, to take sides, not to remain neutral. The vocation will not come down from heaven already fully completed, like a ready-made project packaged down to every detail by the hands of God. Vocational research and its discernment requires responsibility, that ability to respond that involves our freedom, our hands, our acts. The vocation arises from a personal encounter with the Lord and his Word recognised as a promise; vocation is never just 'for me' but always 'for someone else' in service. It is life spent for the love of someone." (All brothers, 116)
We offer you a few days for listening, praying, discerning, living at the school of Jesus, the inner Master...

For information: Monastery of Saint Rita Viale Santa Rita, 13 - 06043 Cascia PG - tel: +39 (0)743.76221 e-mail: monastero@santaritadacascia.org

Making

FEMALE VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION COURSE from 8 (dinner) to 13 (breakfast) August 2022 From the homily of Father Alejandro Moral Antón, Prior General of the Order of Saint Augustine, for the Eucharistic Celebration of the Augustinians, on 21 May in the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia.

# Three roots of the Gospel to love and imitate Rita

or all of us, members of the Order of Saint Augustine, and for all of you who have come to celebrate the feast of this dear saint with great faith, entering into her life full of God's grace and love means facing up to the radicality of the Gospel. Today I would like to emphasise three aspects that, I think, will help us to love and want to imitate Rita even more, to know our hearts and feel the absolute need that we have to change them for more human and fraternal hearts, and to acknowledge our weakness that gives us need of God.

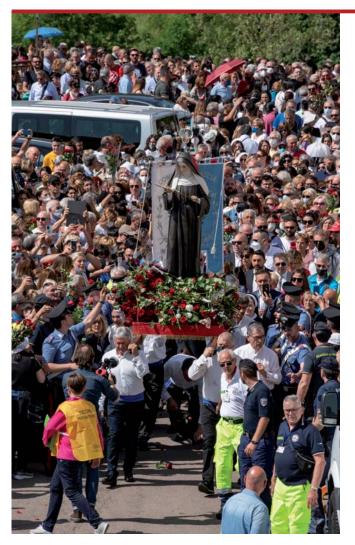
The first thing that we believers must do is listen to the Word of God. The Book of Proverbs says: "My son, if you will accept my words...". Truly the only words that make sense and that help human beings to live in justice and brotherhood are the Words of Scripture. Dear brothers and sisters: "Read the Word of God!", "Listen to it!", "Love it!", "Make it your own!" For if you know how to listen to the voice of God, then "you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will watch over you,



understanding will guard you, delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech, who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways."

We have been called on to become saints. That is why we say with the Psalmist: "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths." Listen to me: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Towards the end of Paul's Letter to the Romans, there is a summary of the evangelical principles that guided Saint Rita during her life. Saint Paul writes: "Do not

The gospel principles guided Saint Rita during her lifetime



take revenge my dear friends (here we can say: what good is vengeance, hatred, doing evil, waging war, hating others...) but leave room for

# **PRAYER**

Long live Rita, the dear Saint who listens to our words in heaven. All the people distraught by grief lay out their desires to her. O! Bless, o' Rita, our loving hearts in every moment of this life and may our love be sacred to You.

Extract from a hymn to Saint Rita

God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord." Earlier the apostle Paul himself had written to us: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." "Brothers, do not let charity be hypocritical. Bless those who persecute you." "On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink." In order to act in this way and live like the saints, we must be "joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

Be humble because humility is a reflection of God's love. Jesus says: "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." This text emphasises the centrality, the place that Christ must have in our lives. Those who know that their life depends on the love of God and not on their own pride finds true life.

It is not the criteria of the world that must guide my life: supporting things that are politically correct, trying not to make waves in order to be accepted, so as to be problem-free. Nor is it the criteria of history, nor the criteria of personal convenience, that is, a kind of paganism of the heart, where we ourselves want to become the centre and reference point, as if God did not exist. The criterion for our actions and choices must always be the Gospel. May the Virgin, Mother of Good Counsel and Consolation, help us to live according to the Gospel with the same intensity as Saint Rita, AMEN

From the homily of Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, delivered at the Pontifical Solemnity of 22 May 2022 on the avenue of the Basilica of Saint Rita in Cascia.

# Teacher of peace, holiness and true Christian life

any of us today pay homage to Saint Rita in order to place the purpose of imitating her virtues in her "hands", especially those of forgiveness, peace, charity and suffering.

To the intercession of this humble woman of Roccaporena I entrust the many intentions of the Holy Father Francis, who never ceases to make his voice heard daily so that the senseless spiral of death in Ukraine may be broken as soon as possible. In Umbria, this land of faith and peace, I hope that negotiations will resume soon and that we can finally achieve the greatly desired peace. Violence - as the story of this woman of faith reminds us - never resolves conflicts. but only increases their dramatic consequences.

Truly Rita is the strong woman and wise virgin who indicates the authentic path to holiness in all the states of life as a faithful sequence following Christ until death. Dear friends, the example of this woman in love with God reminds us that it is time to propose this "high standard" of ordinary Christian life to everyone with conviction once again.

In the Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate (19/3/18),

Pope Francis wrote: "We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves. Are you called to the consecrated life? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy. Are you married? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or your wife [...]. Are you in a posi-

It is time to propose this "high measure" of ordinary Christian life to everyone once again



The way of holiness is made of ordinary gestures made in an extraordinary way, such as those of Saint Rita

tion of authority? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain" (no. 14). In other words, the way of holiness is not made of heroic gestures, but of ordinary gestures made in an extraordinary way, such as those of Saint Rita. The life of the saint of Cascia and of the saints in general is the maximum glorification of human nature. Holiness is the state of the those who introduce as much of the divine as possible into their lives, bringing their natural, intellectual and moral abilities to the full.

This is confirmed by the message of the Gospel through the figurative discourse "of the vine and the branches" (Jn 15: 1-14). Jesus uses the image of the vine to tell us how much care God has for us. There are three characters: the winemaker, who is the Father, the vine, who is Jesus, and the branches, who are the disciples. The Father, like every winemaker, takes care of his vine: he cultivates it, prunes it and organises the harvest. We are cared for by the Father! Jesus presents himself as the vine, as one who has taken root among us. Indeed, he is not simply beside us, but we are in him. If he is the vine, we are the branches, the branches from which the grapes spring forth. The vine and the branches are fed

by the same sap; they are one plant. The image of the vine and the branches also allows Jesus to discuss pruning. We are all branches, but we need to be pruned to produce fruit. This does not mean that God sends us suffering, rather that he pushes us to cut away our selfishness. The "fruit" of which the Gospel speaks is, in fact, the works of love. Dear brothers and sisters, let us not be discouraged if at times we feel like dry branches, disappointed by our failures, tempted to fall in on ourselves. The Lord, in fact, manages to allow sap to circulate in even our driest branches, and helps us to bear fruit despite our weaknesses.

In this way we will be able to follow the plan that St Paul proposes to all Christians in the passage of the Letter to the Romans (second letter): "Charity has no pretence: flee evil with horror, cling to goodness; love one another with fraternal affection, compete in esteeming one another."

Saint Rita is a living portrait of this page of Scripture. Above all, she did not allow herself to be overcome by evil, but rather she defeated evil with good. May she lead us by the hand, so that each of us may find the strength to continue to hope and to overcome all kinds of evil by doing good. Amen.

### IN CASCIA TO DISCUSS LOVE AND THE FUTURE

During the Holy Week, the Friends of Saint Augustine chose the city of Saint Rita for a meeting of communion and faith. Led by the Baptist pastor Lidia Maggi, a theologian in service in Varese who deals with training and ecumenical dialogue, they explored the new times of ecumenism in regards to the hope and joy of the Resurrection, which we can experience every day.

From the homily of Father Luciano De Michieli, Rector of the Basilica of Saint Rita of Cascia, in the Eucharistic Celebration for the Benefactors of the Sanctuary, which he presided over on 22 May in the Basilica of the Saint of the Impossible.

# Evil is overcome through love, not wars

t the end of this feast, it is wonderful to be able to praise God by thanking the benefactors. Because everything happens through Grace, starting with the many who volunteered, dedicating time to service with joy and passion and trying to welcome everyone in the best possible way. Then there are those who did it as part of their job, a job that needs a lot of humanity, because it involves contact with others, patience, listening and care. And then there are all those, living and dead, who helped to create this place, as a place of encounter with God and with Rita.

Rita's life was not lived to do her own will, but to follow God's will, with hospitality. This hospitality was difficult, because sometimes the things that God asked her to accept were hard, but she was always full of trust, in the certainty of being loved and that, therefore, even if she did not understand it, she knew that there was a plan of love behind it. Her life force was love and this strength allowed her to welcome the true Love, that of the Spirit of God, which was poured into our hearts.

The testimony of Rita was gathered together by Blessed Maria

Teresa Fasce, who was beatified 25 years ago this year: this young woman from Genoa wanted to consecrate herself to God, but when



she heard the story of the life of Rita, who had just been canonised, she felt in her heart a gift of the Spirit, namely the need to come to Cascia. And that's why she dedicated her life to making Rita known to the world. One of Mother Fasce's phrases is: "I am happy because I can say that I have never acted on my will." It is a strong phrase for a wilful woman like her, who had to

When God builds everything is created, even if it seems impossible

This Basilica was built during the war fight to come to Cascia, because her parents did not want to send her and the nuns did not consider her suitable because she was a noblewoman in a small and remote village. However, God had other plans and she followed God's desire, because when God builds everything is created, even if it seems impossible to us. Just think that this marvellous Basilica was constructed during the war, and



We ask Rita to give us the Grace to heal from hatred consecrated two years after the Second World War, when there was only poverty... and yet look what was born from the generosity of all the benefactors who, in a trickle, gave a little something so that this place could honour God and hospitality, so that many people could meet Rita here. By meeting her, they find the strength to face life, because this is Rita's gift: she is not the one who takes away pain and difficulties, but like Christ she teaches you to embrace the Cross,

that is, to love your life, believing that wounds are also places of Grace. This is the death of evil. Evil tries to defeat us, to detach us from God, to make us hate God, to close us up, to break off our relationships and think that our life is over. It tries to convince us in every way to tear us from the Vine, which is God, knowing that if the branch does not remain attached to the vine then it really dies. Rather, if you love you are attached, and even if your branch bleeds an infinite good is born from it.

We come here before Rita because we feel understood, we feel that the suffering she experienced before us is similar to ours. And we understand that for Rita everything takes place within a plan of love. Behold, this is the great Grace that we celebrate in these days: to believe in love, that evil is overcome by love, not by wars. We can only do this if we say: "Lord, I trust vou. I do not want hatred to take my heart and lock it in a cage." This means overcoming evil with good, it does not mean accepting everything, closing your eyes, being trampled underfoot. It means having a heart that loves seeking truth and justice, but wanting everyone to be saved, even those who have hurt you in life. We all have our thorns and, in this regard, we ask Rita to teach us, to give us the Grace to heal from hatred. How many tears have we gathered, tears of Grace! Therefore, we thank the benefactors of the past and those who still support the Monastery and the Sanctuary, so that they may be a home where everyone can encounter the love of God.

# Saint Rita International Recognition Award

The Women of Rita 2022, champions of life and love, were the key to the feast











# Together in Cascia from all over Italy

Relive the General Meeting while awaiting that of 15 and 16 April 2023



### PRIMARY PIOUS UNION





Father Ludovico Maria Centra, PUP ecclesiastical assistant



With seven new affiliates, the results of the meeting could not be more positive: Cellino San Marco (province of Brindisi), Aragon, Ravanusa, Lucca Sicula (province of Agrigento), Nicolosi, Biancavilla (province of Catania) and Terrasini (province of Palermo), received the PUP cockade from Mother Prioress, Sister Maria Rosa Bernardinis









### PRIMARY PIOUS UNION



Despite the sudden snowfall, Cascia was warmed by the **increasingly large PUP family**. There was an **air of love and faith** in the city, in the name of Saint Rita



### **DISCOVER THE NEXT REGIONAL MEETINGS**

**Central Italy:** 4 September at the Sanctuary of Madonna del Buon Consiglio in Genazzano (RM) Info: Monaco Maria Rita +39 3287855329 - Felici Anna Maria +39 3389132453

Puglia: September 18 at the Church of San Domenico in Molfetta (BA)

Info: Albanese Angela +39 3332722928 - Valente Angelo +39 3921599138

Northern Italy: 9 October at the Basilica San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro (S. Agostino) in Pavia

Info: conventopavia@agostiani.it - Roccio Francesco +39 3393353309 - Gadolini

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**Calabria:** 30 October at the Sanctuary of Madonna dell'Itria in Cirò Marina (KR) Info: Niki De Franco +39 3382066924 - Colucci Angela +39 3298754401



THE BEEHIVE OF SAINT RITA IS A FAMILY WHERE HOPES ALSO FEED ON LOVE. Founded by Blessed Mother Fasce in 1938, the Beehive of Saint Rita has become home, school and assistance for many young girls. A real family that includes all our supporters who, with their help, continue to give a future to thousands of young people in difficulty. Stay close to us, your love is the most solid foundation on which to build new hopes. alveare@santaritadacascia.org • santaritadacascia.org/beehive

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